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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000465

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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI
NSC FOR RAMCHAND, WHITE HOUSE FOR OVP HANNAH AND RAVICH

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [OVIP](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: JANUARY 17 VICE PRESIDENT MEETING WITH KUWAITI
PRIME MINISTER

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reason 1.5 (b) and (d)

11. (U) PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.

The Vice President
Ambassador Richard LeBaron
NEA/PDAS Elizabeth Cheney
OVP Chief of Staff David Addington
National Security Advisor to the VP John Hannah
Deputy Assistant to the VP for NSA Samantha Ravich
Gamal Helal (interpreter)
DCM Tueller (notetaker)

Kuwait

Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Ahmad Al-Sabah
Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Sabah Al-Sabah
PM Office Under Secretary Ahmad Al-Fahd
Ambassador to the U.S. Shaykh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah
PM Office Under Secretary Shaykh Khalid Abdullah Al-Sabah
PM Advisor Muhammad Abulhassan
Shaykh Muhammad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Head of Citizens Follow-up
Department
Shaykh Nasser Mubarak Al-Sabah, President of CineMagic
Amiri Diwan Protocol Officer Khalid al-Roumi
PM Office Asst Under Secretary Shaykh Fawaz Saud Al-Sabah
(notetaker)

Summary

12. (C) On the night of January 17 at the Prime Minister,s residence, Vice President Cheney conveyed condolences on behalf of the President and the American people to Kuwaiti Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmad on the passing of Amir Jabir Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The Prime Minister said Kuwait would continue to adhere to the principles followed by his late brother, most especially friendship with the U.S., the laying down of a foundation for democratic rule, and building up Kuwait for the benefit of its people. He said Kuwait will work tirelessly in support of U.S. efforts to bring peace and stability to Iraq. Kuwait shares U.S. concerns about Iran with added fears related to the proximity of the Busheir nuclear facility. Kuwait is pinning its hopes for a solution to Iran,s nuclear ambitions on efforts led by the EU and the UNSC. End Summary.

Reaffirming Strength of U.S.-Kuwaiti Ties

13. (C) Vice President Cheney was welcomed to the Prime Minister,s residence at 11:00 p.m. by Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmad and Shaykh Mubarak Jabir Al-Sabah, the eldest son of the late Amir. After receiving the Vice President,s expression of condolence, Shaykh Mubarak departed and the Prime Minister escorted the President into his reception room for a 35 minute meeting. The Vice President noted that it was fifteen years ago that night that the military campaign to liberate Kuwait had begun. The U.S. had lost a friend with the passing of Amir Jabir. The two governments had worked well over the years to meet many challenges and President Bush was committed to continuing that relationship.

14. (C) Shaykh Sabah spoke warmly about the leadership his brother had provided to Kuwait and lamented the loss to his country. The late Amir established a clear path for Kuwait and the Prime Minister pledged to adhere to the same governing principles. Foremost amongst those principles were a rock solid friendship with the United States, laying a foundation for democratic rule, and building up Kuwait for the benefit of its people.

Support for Stabilizing Iraq

15. (C) On the challenges being faced in Iraq, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Kuwait,s commitment to working with the U.S. and with Iraqi political leaders to bring security and stability to the country. Because of the "tangible feel" Kuwaitis have for what Iraqis suffered under the Saddam regime, the GOK could be counted on to "shoulder our responsibilities" and work tirelessly for the political and

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economic development of Iraq.

16. (C) Shaykh Sabah noted the remarkable transformation in Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations symbolized by the fact that over the past three days, President Talabani, Prime Minister Jaafari, Ayad Allawi, Ghazi al-Yawar and scores of other Iraqis representing all religious and ethnic groups, had come to Kuwait to pay tribute to the late Amir. Kuwait even facilitated the travel from Saudi Arabia of Muqtada al-Sadr for the purpose of a condolence call. Kuwait,s interest in this regard was clear; the whole region needed to work to help the Iraqis achieve unity. Developments on the political side were significant and visible. Unfortunately, that progress was not being matched on the security front. Shaykh Sabah said growing capabilities of the insurgents, including access to more advanced weapons that could target helicopters, was a matter of grave concern. Kuwait agreed fully with the U.S. approach of helping Iraqis put together a government that could provide security for the country.

17. (C) Vice President Cheney said it was correct to point out the remarkable transformations taking place in Iraq in the less than three years since Saddam's removal. The U.S. was firmly committed to the path it was on and was convinced that progress was being made in training up Iraqi forces that would be able to take on a role in stabilizing the country. It was vital that we succeed in Iraq.

Concern About Dangers of Iran's Nuclear Program

18. (C) Vice President Cheney asked Shaykh Sabah to comment on the state of affairs in Iran, noting that Iran's refusal to enter into any agreement on its nuclear program and Ahmadinejad's provocative public statements were very troubling. The Prime Minister said Kuwait had more reason than most to be concerned about Iran. The nuclear facility at Busheir was only 100 kilometers away; everyone remembered what happened at Chernobyl. The impact of a nuclear accident

in Iran would have horrendous consequences for Kuwait. If Iran acquired the capability to construct a nuclear weapon, the danger would extend to the whole region and beyond.

¶9. (C) At the UN last fall, Shaykh Sabah said he spoke frankly with Iranian President Ahmadinejad. "I told him he had been elevated to his office by the power and enthusiasm of the Iranian street, but I warned him that the role of a leader is to bring wisdom to bear on complicated issues, not to follow the misleading slogans and banners that drive the street". Shaykh Sabah said he hoped that Ahmadinejad had the wisdom to deal correctly with the nuclear issue. Kuwait was placing its hopes in the EU and the UNSC to work for a resolution that averted danger. Referring Iran to the UNSC was an option to be looked at.

¶10. (C) The meeting ended at 11:40 p.m. with the Prime Minister thanking the Vice President for the visit and for his expressions of condolence and respect for the late Amir. He asked that his thanks and best wishes be conveyed to the President and the people of the United States.
LeBaron